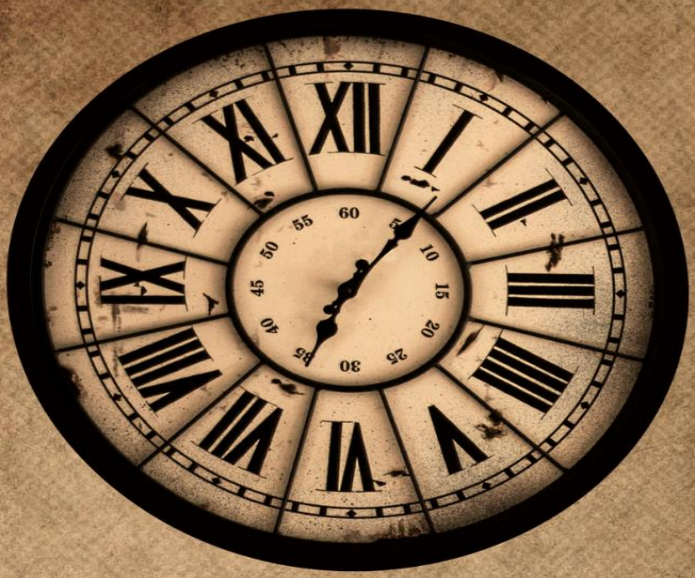

HISTORICITY OF THE VEDAS

BY ANGKUR D. MUGDHA

THE HISTORICITY OF THE VEDAS

WRITTEN BY: ANGKUR D. MUGDHA

Prayers

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Hare Rāma Hare Rāma

Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

To begin with, I offer my utmost prayers to Śrī **Kṛṣṇa, who is the supreme personality of Godhead. I offer my utmost prayer to** Śrīmati **Radha Rani, who is the supreme Goddess and Hladini shakti of Kṛṣṇa. I offer my utmost prayers to** Śrī **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda prabhu, who are known as Gaura-Nitai. I offer my respectful obeisances to all the Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇavīs (devotees).**

Śrī **Vaiṣṇava Pranama:**

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyas cha

kṛpā-sindhubhya eva cha

patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo

vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ

Translation:

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. They are just like desire trees and can fulfill the desires of everyone, and they are full of compassion for the fallen conditioned souls."

May the blessings of Śrī **Kṛṣṇa and all the Vaiṣṇavas be with everyone reading this book.**

Notes from the author:

Hello, I am Angkur Deb Mugdha, a freshman in high school. I am a born Hindu and follower of Vaishnavism (not initiated yet), a sect of Hinduism that believes Lord Vishnu to be supreme. So, these are some key points that should be considered when reading this book:

- **Since I am a follower of Vaishnavism, in a lot of places I call Bhagavān Vishnu or Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa as the supreme Lord. This book is like a combination of both religious and historical research investigation in the form of a book.**
- **I have not included references to every single inscription or historical finding related to the Vedas. My goal was to keep this book simple and accessible so that everyone can understand its content. To maintain clarity and readability, I have also kept the book concise.**
- **The book is entirely based on online research.**

If there is any question regarding this book, feel free to email me at: angkurmugdha@gmail.com

Introduction

In this age of Kali, us humans have been stuck in this material world with very limited knowledge. We hold firmly to the things that fulfill our material desires and give up anything we do not desire, may it be good or bad. We always look out for things that give us sense gratification. Such as lust, anger, and greed. In the Bhagavad Gītā, which is an ancient Hindu text, in its chapter 16 verse 21, the following has been said:

tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ
dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas
tasmād etat trayaṁ tyajet

Translation: There are three gates leading to this hell – lust, anger and greed. Every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul. -Srila Prabhupada's translation.

The reason I am showing this particular verse is because all of us humans possess these three qualities. These three qualities are natural to have but at the same time they are demoniac qualities which we should abandon because if we don't, then we will always go down the wrong path. Wonder how this connects to my research investigation paper? Let's look at it.

We have continuously adopted to the new systems and cultures of our society while forgetting the rich culture of ancient India over a period. We have forgotten an ancient, advanced civilization and a Saṁskṛti that has influenced many other social well beings around the world, and I would argue all of this happened because of those three qualities. How? Starting off with the quality of lust. When we have lust, our mind is bewildered, and we try to gratify our senses in any way possible. During this time, we do not know what is right or wrong. Our bewildered mind takes over our actions so we

start doing things that we shouldn't do. In Bhagavad Gītā, it is said in chapter 16 verse 16:

aneka-citta-vibhrāntā

moha-jāla-samāvṛtāḥ

prasaktāḥ kāma-bhogeṣu

patanti narake 'śucau

Translation: Thus, perplexed by various anxieties and bound by a network of illusions, they become too strongly attached to sense enjoyment and fall down into hell.

From here we can see that we get attached to sense gratification too strongly meaning we give up Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya in Hinduism is a way of living when we refrain from fulfilling the pleasure of the senses and live a controlled religious life. In Kaliyuga, everything we do is the exact opposite of what we would do during Brahmacharya. Being a brahmacharya entails devoting oneself to God through discipline and determined study. In this way, through the rise of sense gratification or "lust" in us, we have stopped reading the scriptures which resulted in decline of the Vedas. Interestingly, when we look at Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.2.1, it gives a future prediction about how in Kaliyuga the true religious principles will slowly fade away day by day. Now let's move on to how anger caused the decline of the Vedas. This one is very easy because Bhagavad- Gītā took the responsibility to explain its meaning, not me! Here it goes:

krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ

sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ

smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo

buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati

Translation: From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool.

Boom! There you go. In this verse it LITERALLY tells us why the decline of Vedas happened because of anger. It talks about how anger leads to bewilderment of memory and the bewilderment of memory leads to the loss of intelligence. The Vedas are not that easy to study and comprehend. There is a qualification process the people have to go through to become qualified to study the Vedas and then the people have to stay consistent with it for several years until they can grasp the knowledge of the Vedas but if the intelligence is lost, the Vedas cannot be studied because the very two things a person needs to study the Vedas are memory and intelligence which gets diminished by the quality of anger. Historically, when foreign invaders arrived in India and tried to convert Hindus to Islam or Christianity, they used very clever strategies. The invaders knew that India is a very culture-based placed and almost everyone is emotionally connected to the cultures and traditions which was the root of their living. So, the invaders decided to attack the root by falsely showing how Hinduism is bad, and the religions of the invaders are better. They successfully mis-interpreted the Varṇa Vyavasthā. The invaders preached that the Varṇa Vyavasthā was a birth-based caste system which imposed the concept of inequality among the society, which is of course not true at all. Even though they were preaching false things about Hinduism, many Hindus at that time believed the foreigners and rose anger in their own faith which of course ended up causing loss of memory and intelligence and that resulted into the decline of the Vedas. At last, we need to look at how greed caused the decline of the Vedas. To understand this, there is a beautiful verse in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.2.2, which states that in this age of Kali, wealth is considered something that decides if a person is “good” or not. I am using this verse because money is a thing that everyone is

chasing in this era. Money surely does give material benefits and happiness, but it doesn't fulfill us spiritually as it cannot offer lasting joy. It is said that there are four legs of the religion which are purity, charity, mercy, and truth and there is only one left in the age of Kali which gets destroyed day by day. If there is no real charity in this world anymore, then that means greed is playing at its best. Now, greed was the reason for the decline of the Vedas because when the foreign invaders came, they took many resources that India had, leaving many Indians poor. So, the poor people looked for any opportunity to feed their needs and one of the ways was to get converted to other religions for an exchange of something. There are still many instances in India where Christian missionaries are converting the Hindus by giving them money, food, jobs etc. When people are poor and don't have necessary resources to uphold their lives, the greed gets in their mind and when someone becomes greedy, that person could do literally anything to get whatever they want. So, in this way, people being greedy has been a reason for the decline of the Vedas.

I want to let the people know what the Vedas are and why is it so important for us and so this research investigation on the Historicity of the Vedas is an attempt to showcase the rich history of the Vedas.

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The Vedas

The word Veda means knowledge or wisdom. This word comes from the root "vid" which means "to know" in sanskrit. The Vedas present the knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In Bhagavad Gita chapter 15 verse 15, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "***vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo.***" Srila Prabhupada in his Bhagavad Gita translation translates it as, "By all the Vedas, I am to be known." Here we can see that the Vedas tell us who Śrī Kṛṣṇa is.

The Vedas are said to be apāurūṣeya. Apāurūṣeya means that it is not from a human origin. The knowledge of the Vedas was given to Brahma by Parama Ishvara. The knowledge of the Vedas then came down the guru-shishya Parampara or the disciplic succession system where the guru passes on the knowledge to the student and then the student delivers the same knowledge unto their student, and this keeps repeating. The Vedas came down this system by hearing it and that is why the Vedas are called śruti. In one of the most prominent scriptures of Hinduism, called Manusmriti, Law of Manu, it is said in chapter 2 verse 10: śrutistu vedo vijñeyo. Mahāmahopādhyāya Sir Gaṅgānāth Jhā in his Manusmriti translation translates this as following: The Veda should be known as the "revealed word" (śruti). So, the Vedas being śruti śāstra(scripture), never needed to be written down.

Later in Dvāpara Yuga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa took the incarnation of Vyāsadeva. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam canto 1 chapter 3 verse 21, it is said: Thereafter, in the seventeenth incarnation of Godhead, Śrī Vyāsadeva appeared in the womb of Satyavatī through Parāśara Muni, and he divided the one Veda into several branches and sub-branches, seeing that the people in general were less intelligent -Srila Prabhupada's translation. Supreme God is knowledgeable of past, present, and future so he knew that as time passes by, people will get worse and especially in Kali-yuga, people will not follow the

scriptures as much as they should. So, he separated the Veda into four different parts called Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda. By dividing the Veda, God made it easier for us as it now has different knowledges of the Vedas that can be attained separately.

Rigveda is known to be the biggest Veda out of all. It consists of 10 Mandalas (books), 1028 Sūktas (hymns), and 10,552 Mantrāḥ (verses). Atharvaveda has 20 Kāṇḍas (sections), 730 Sūktas (hymns) and around 6000 Mantrāḥ (verses), Yajurveda has 40 adhyāyas (chapters) and around 2000 Mantrāḥ (verses) and Sāmaveda is divided into 2 parts called Pūrva-Ārcika and Uttara-Ārcika and contain almost 1900 Mantrāḥ (verses). Now this is just covering the Samhita portion of the Vedas. Diving deeper, the Vedas as a whole include four parts. The parts are Samhita, Brahmāṇa, Āraṇyaka, and Upanishad. Brahmāṇa parts of the Vedas explain various verses of the Vedas, especially talking about the instructions for Vedic rituals. Here is a list for what Brahmāṇas are for which Vedas:

Rigveda: Aitareya Brahmāṇa and Kausitaki Brahmāṇa

Atharvaveda: Gopatha Brahmāṇa

Yajurveda: Shatapatha Brahmāṇa and Taittiriya Brahmāṇa

Sāmaveda: Jaiminiya Brahmāṇa and Pañcaviṁśa Brahmāṇa

Moving on to the Āraṇyaka. “Āraṇyaka” comes from the Sanskrit word “Āraṇya” which means forest so that means that the Āraṇyakas are a part of the Vedas which give “meditative” interpretation of the Vedic rituals or philosophical interpretation of the rituals. Here is a list for what Āraṇyakas are for which Vedas:

Rigveda: Aitareya Āraṇyaka and Kaushītaki Āraṇyaka

Atharvaveda: No distinct Āraṇyaka like other three

Yajurveda: Taittirīya Āraṇyaka and Bṛhadāraṇyaka

Sāmaveda: Pañcaviṁśa Āraṇyaka and Jaiminīya Āraṇyaka

Furthermore, the last part of the Vedas are the Upanishads. The Upanishads are very well known in the western world for its spiritual and philosophical significance. The Upanishads talk mostly about the creation of the universe, the God, the soul etc. There are 108 main Upanishads and out of these 108 Upanishads, there are 11 principal Upanishads. Most of the sects of Hinduism like Vaishnavism, Advaitism etc. have their own commentaries and interpretations of these principal Upanishads. For example, scholars like Madhvācārya and Adi Śaṅkarācārya wrote commentaries for these principal Upanishads. The 11 principal Upanishads are as follows:

1. Īśa Upaniṣad - Yajurveda
2. Kena Upaniṣad - Sāmaveda
3. Kaṭha Upaniṣad – Yajurveda
4. Praśna Upaniṣad - Atharvaveda
5. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad - Atharvaveda
6. Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad - Atharvaveda
7. Taittirīya Upaniṣad - Yajurveda
8. Aitareya Upaniṣad - Rigveda
9. Chāndogya Upaniṣad - Sāmaveda
10. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad – Yajurveda
11. Svetasvatara Upaniṣad - Yajurveda

Then we have the Upavedas. Upavedas are parts of the Vedas that give more of a practical knowledge of various things. There are 4 Upavedas. The Upavedas are:

Āyurveda – Rigveda

Dhanurveda - Yajurveda

Gāndharvaveda - Sāmaveda

Arthashastra – Atharvaveda

To recap, I gave a small simple introduction of the Vedas in this section, so it is easy to understand a lot of the details ahead in this book. The things we went through in this section are as follows:

- The Vedas are believed to be the main scriptures of Hinduism which came down by guru-shishya Parampara.
- There was only 1 Veda in the beginning but Srila VedaVyasa divided it into 4 Vedas in Dvapara Yuga, so the 4 Vedas are: Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda.
- The Vedas are divided into 4 parts: Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka, and Upanishad.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare

The Antiquity of the Vedas

Before we start discussing this topic, I would like to break down the term "antiquity." The word antiquity in simple terms mean the ancient past of something, which includes its origin, age, and significance throughout the history. Now when we talk about the antiquity of the Vedas, we are not only going to look at the dating of the Vedas, but we will look at evidence from the ancient times through which we can estimate around when the Vedas were written down. We will look at it from a historical perspective very scrutinizingly.

Manuscripts:

To start, we will look at the manuscripts of the Vedas. Now something to keep in mind is that Vedas were orally passed down and not written down until a lot later in history. This is LITERALLY because Vedas are called the śruti, which means something that is heard. This fact has been confirmed by Arthur Berriedale Keith, a Scottish scholar of Sanskrit and a professor in the University of Edinburgh. In his book "The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads," he states, "Preserved in its early stages by oral tradition and long regarded as too sacred to be reduced to writing, the text affords abundant internal proof of the general accuracy with which it was preserved" (Keith 1).

Keith here makes a very clear statement that Vedas were NOT written down in ancient times and orally passed down. Keith says, "too sacred to be reduced to writing" indicating that it is not because there was no technology in Ancient India for the Vedas to be written down, but it was just not part of the tradition and because it has been passing down since the ancient times, it would be "reduced" down if it was written. Also, when Keith says, "abundant internal proof of the general accuracy," it shows the authenticity of the Vedas that have remained since the old times even after being orally

transmitted from generations to generations. So, when we talk about manuscripts, there aren't a lot of manuscripts which go back really old in history because as we saw, Vedas were not meant to be written down. The oldest manuscript of Vedas that we have are published by Harvard University Press, called "Facsimile Edition of Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā 1–20 (Saṃhitā- and Padapāṭha) from Nepal and Western Tibet (c. 1150 CE)." These manuscripts were presented by Michael Witzel, a very famous Indologist, and Qinyuan Wu, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkley. Then we have the manuscripts of The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In a publication by UNESCO called "MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER Rigvedasamhita, Rigvedasamhita-Padapatha and Rigvedasamhitabhashya," page 7 says, "There are 30 manuscripts of Rigveda at the Institute, collected from different parts of India like Kashmir, Gujarat, the then Rajaputana, Central Provinces etc. They are written in Sharada, Devanagari and Devanagari with Prishthamatra and the material used for writing is birch bark as well as paper. The oldest of these manuscripts is dated 1464 A. D. It may be pointed out that manuscript no. 5/1875-76 was used by Prof. Max Müller for his edition of the Rigveda with Sayana's commentary." This is very significant evidence and there is a lot to analyze here. Starting off with the diversity of collecting Rigveda manuscripts because it says that these manuscripts come from different parts of India, such as Kashmir, Gujarat, Rajputana, Central Provinces, showing that the study of Vedas was very common throughout the entire country not just any specific place. This strengthens the fact that ancient Vedic civilization was really "religion-based" and was quite good at keeping up the religious practices. Then, it says that the oldest manuscript out of the collection is dated 1464 A.D. which is 561 years ago, and they are inwritten in multiple scripts which shows the adaption to modern technology from oral tradition. Even though 1464 A.D. is a recent date to establish the great antiquity of the Vedas, it is still a very strong written historical record of the Vedas and the shift from oral tradition to writing the verses

down says that people really wanted to preserve the Vedas throughout the time and maintain its authenticity.

Something to keep in mind is that when Vedas were started to be written down, they didn't have access to paper and pencil like right now. The Vedas were written down in birch bark or palm leaves which could be easily lost or destroyed if they are not take care of very good under good temperature etc. and my guess is that a large number of manuscripts have been lost because of that. Another key point is that we can't date the text of the Vedas based on the oldest surviving manuscript nor any text and this is because that is the latest possible date of the surviving publication during that time, not the earliest. To date the Vedas historically, we must take other steps, and our next step is the inscriptions.

Inscriptions:

India has an ocean of ancient inscriptions which provide us valuable insights into the ancient Indian history. Writing down on rocks, walls, pillars etc. was a very common practice and was done mostly to keep records of the empire that was ruling during that period to track down their victories, achievements etc. Inscriptions are very significant for the historians, specifically Indologists, when it comes to dating the Vedas because there are a lot of inscriptions which specifically mention Vedas, it's preservation and other surrounding subjects. Through these inscriptions, we will have a decent idea of around what time in history Vedas were studied very much, helping us come to a fair dating.

MANDASÖR INSCRIPTION OF NARAVARMAN: THE KRITA YEAR 461

Starting off with the inscription that states parts of a very famous verse of Rigveda. This inscription not only states a verse of the Rigveda but also goes on

to glorify the supreme lord Narayana, so this inscription is very special. This inscription was written in Brahmi script around 4th and 5th century, during the era of Narvarman, the ruler of Malwa during that period. Let us look at what the first line of the inscription says:

1. [S]iddham [*] Sahasra-śirasē tasmai Purushāy-amit-atmanē [*] chatus-samudra-paryyaṅka-toya-nidrālavē namaḥ [1] Śrir=mMā (Mā) lava-gan-amnātē praśastē Krita-samjñítē [*]

Translation: Success! salutation to that Purusha with thousand heads and immeasurable soul, who sleeps on the waters of the four oceans as on a bedstead.

1. In the beginning of the line, we can see how the description of the Lord aligns with the description given in Rigveda Purusha Sukta and Purusha Sukta is in other Vedas too. In the Purusha Sukta, it says, "sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ," meaning that Narayana has thousand heads. The reason I am saying it is Narayana because this Purusha Sukta is denoting to only Narayana because in scriptures, we can see that Lord Narayana is said to have thousand heads. One such scriptural reference is Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.5.35:

sa eva puruṣas tasmād
aṇḍaṁ nirbhidya nirgataḥ
sahasrorv-aṅghri-bāhv-akṣaḥ
sahasrānana-śīrṣavān

Translation: The Lord [Mahā-Viṣṇu], although lying in the Causal Ocean, came out of it, and dividing Himself as Hiraṇyagarbha, He entered into each universe and assumed the virāṭ-rūpa, with thousands of legs, arms, mouths, heads, etc.

So, we can see that it is very clear in the inscription, it is talking about the Supreme Lord Narayana. So a conclusion statement of the inscription would be, "The MANDASÖR INSCRIPTION OF NARAVARMAN: THE KRITA YEAR 461 is glorifying Lord Narayan through the Purusha Sukta of the Vedas."

NANEGHAT INSCRIPTION OF SATAVAHANA: 1st CENTURY BCE

The Naneghat Inscription of Satavahana was written by Queen Naganika of the Satavahana Dynasty, somewhere between 2nd and 1st century BCE. This inscription is in Maharashtra, India but more specifically in the Western Ghats. The Naneghat Cave is a little far away from Pune and Mumbai, but it is next to other ancient sites. Now, the Naneghat inscription was discovered by William Sykes who was not an archeologist but accidentally came across the inscription. Later on, the inscription was visited by Archeological Survey of India (ASI) and studied further. Let's look at what the inscription is about.

Left Wall:

1. sidhaṃ ... no dhaṃmasa namo īdasa namo saṃkaṃsana-vāsudevānaṃ caṃda-sūtānaṃ mahimāvatānaṃ catuṃnaṃ caṃ lokapālānaṃ yama-varuna-kubera-vāsavānaṃ namo kumāravarasa vedisirisa raño
2. .....vīrasa sūrasa apratihatacakasa dakhināpaṭhapatino raño simukasātavāhanasa sunhāya .....
3. mā ..... bālāya mahāraṭhino aṃgiya-kulavadhanasa sagaragirivaravalayāya pathaviya pathamavīrasa vasa ... ya va alaha .....salasu ..ya mahato maha ...

4. .... sātakaṇi sirisa bhāriyā devasa putadasa varadasa kāmadasa dhanadasa vedisiri-mātu satino sirimatasa ca mātuya sīma .... pathamaya .....
5. variya ..... ānāgavaradayiniya māsopavāsiniya gahaṭāpasāya caritabrahmacariyāya dikhavratayaṃñasuṃḍāya yañāhutādhūpanasugaṃdhāya niya .....
6. rāyasa ..... yañehi yiṭhaṃ vano | agādheya-yaṃño dakhinā dinā gāvo bārasa 12 aso ca 1 anārabhaniyo yaṃño dakhinā dhenu .....
7. ..... dakhināya dinā gāvo 1700 hathī 10 .....
8. ..... as ..... sasataraya vāsalaṭhi 289 kubhiyo rupāmayiyo 17 bhi .....
9. ..... riko yaṃño dakhināyo dinā gāvo 11,000 asā 1,000 pasapako .....
10. ..... 12 gamavaro 1 dakhinā kāhāpanā 24,400 pasapako kāhāpanā 6,000 | rājasūya-yaṃño ..... sakaṭaṃ

Left wall translation with no interpolation:

1. *Sidham* to Dharma, adoration to Indra, adoration to Samkarshana and Vāsudeva, the descendants of the Moon ("Chandra") endowed with majesty, and to the four guardians of the world ("Lokapalas"), Yama, Varuna, Kubera and Vāsava; praise to Vedisri, the best of royal princes (*kumara*)! Of the king.
2. .... of the brave hero, whose rule is unopposed, the lord of Dakshinapath, King Simuka the Satavahana.....
3. By ..... the daughter of the Maharathi, the increaser of the Amgiya race, the first hero of the earth that is girdled by the ocean and the best of mountains....
4. wife of . . . Sri, the lord who gives sons, boons, desires and wealth, mother of Yedisri and the mother of the illustrious Sakti.....

5. Who gave a . . . most excellent *nagavaradayiniya*, who fasted during a whole month, who in her house an ascetic, who remained chaste, who is well acquainted with initiatory ceremonies, vows and offerings, sacrifices, odoriferous with incense, were offered.....
6. O the king ..... sacrifices were offered. Description - An Agnyadheya sacrifice, a Dakshina was offered twelve, 12, cows and 1 horse; - an Anvarambhaniya sacrifice, the *dakshina*, milch-cows.....
7. ..... *dakshina* were given consisting of 1700 cows, 10 elephants,
8. .... 289.....17 silver waterpots.....
9. ..... a rika-sacrifice, *dakshina* were given 11,000 cows, 1000 horses
10. .....12 . . 1 excellent village, a *dakshina* 24,400 Karshapanas, the spectators and menials 6,001 Karshapanas; a Raja ..... the cart

I have underlined some specific sacrifices that the inscription is talking about. It is very clear that the sacrifices that are being talked about here are Vedic sacrifices. A multidisciplinary journal called "Naneghat Inscription from the Perspective of the Vedic Rituals" by an assistant professor of SBL Centre of Sanskrit and Indological Studies by the name Ambarish Khare, talks about this inscription very briefly. It states on the 2nd page, "Dr. Gokhale has shown that the sacrificial fees mentioned in connection with most of the Vedic sacrifices appearing in the inscription match with those mentioned in the Baudhayana Shrautasutra of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. It implies that the person(s) employed by the Satavahanas as Adhvaryu (main priest belonging to the Yajurveda) for performing these sacrifices belonged to the Sutra of Baudhayana. This discovery throws light on one of the important aspects of religious history of Maharashtra and also on the settlement of Brahmins in ancient Maharashtra." It has been very clearly said by the scholar of this topic who studied the inscription that the sacrifices mentioned in

Naneghat inscription are the sacrifices of Yajurveda along with deities like Indra, Balarama, Kṛṣṇa etc. This Naneghat inscription have been studied by George Bühler, who is very famous for his Sanskrit studies and he praises this inscription by saying "The Nanaghat inscriptions, which belong to the oldest historical documents of Western India, and in some respects are more interesting and important than all the other cave inscriptions taken together, have not received hitherto much attention from Orientalists, though Colonel Sykes' imperfect copies have been available for many years, and excellent photolithographs were printed by Dr. Burgess some time ago"(Report on the Elura cave temples and the Brahmanical and Jaina caves in western India by Archeological Survey of India p.59)

When he says, "more interesting and important than all the other cave inscriptions taken together," that shows how significant the Naneghat inscription is, especially for the historicity of the Vedas. The part of the inscription I showed is only the left wall. I am not showing the right wall or any other part of this inscription because I think there is no necessity of it because they mention more different types of sacrifices which all of them are Vedic śrauta sacrifices.

TĀLAGUNDA PILLAR INSCRIPTION OF KAKUSTHAVARMAN

This inscription was discovered in 1894 by B.L. Rice. It is located in the Talagunda village of Karnataka state in India. The inscription is engraved in a piller that still stands today and it is dated in 5th century AD. This inscription directly gives the name of the three Vedas. On the 2nd line of the inscription, it says, "After him, (victorious are) the gods on earth, the chief of the twice born, who recite the Sama, Rig, and Yajur Vedas." Here Sthanu is praised but this line is clear evidence of the existence of the Vedas in the ancient times. Now why are only 3 Vedas mentioned and not Atharvaveda?

This answer is given in the Answering Misconception chapter under the "Atharva Veda is a Later Addition" section.

VADGAON-MADHAVPUR MEMORIAL PILLAR INSCRIPTION OF SOMAYASAS

The inscription, Vadgaon-Madhavpur Memorial Pillar Inscription of Somayasas, was discovered by Śrī R.S. Panchamukhi, the Director of the Kannada Research Institute, in 1941-1942. This inscription was found in Vadgaon-Madhavpur, around two miles to the east of Belgaum district, Karnataka. The inscription is written in Brahmi characters and Prakrit language, and it is said to be the earliest known stone inscription in Bombay-Karnataka.

Let us look at the inscription in English transliteration:

1.) Sothii.
2.) So
3.) mayasas khambha.
4.) Mola-bhaṁdu-vage[na] kathanasa.
5.) Kāthañasa Somayasasa [kam]
6.) [bho] nithapito gadham asi
7.) ti-vajapeya-kamya
8.) katu-yayisa
9.) aneka-yana-
10.) homa-dhuma-
11.) gahita disabha
12.) gasya anaksha-vedyasya
13.) Saketakasya
14.) Balaparya-sakhasya
15.) Kasyapa-sagotrasya svargatasya

16.) Divase 10000, 80 2

Translation: Success! (this is the memorial) pillar of Somayasas. The pillar (in memory) of Somayasas of the Kassapagotra who knew Katha-sakha, who had performed 80 sacrifices including Vajapeya and other wish-fulfilling rites, the fumes from which enveloped all directions, who was capable of deep intuition, who hailed from Saketa and who was a friend of Balaparya was firmly erected by a group of local people and his relatives on the 10082nd day. (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

From the of the translation of this inscription, there is a conclusion given in Epigraphia Indica to simply understand what this inscription is saying. Here it follows: *(1) Somayaśas, obviously a Brahmaṇa, was a scholar of the Katha-śākhā. (2) He had performed as many as eighty Vedic sacrifices including the Vajapeya, and other wish-fulfiling rites. (3) The smokes arising from his sacrificial fires enveloped all the directions. (4) He knew things that are beyond the ken of the [five] senses (i.e. he had an intuitive knowledge). (5) He had hailed from what is called Saketa. (6) He was a friend of a gentleman (arya) named Balapa. (7) He belonged to the Kāśyapa-gotra. And (8) he had gone to the heavens (i.e. died)*

A key point to look over is the dating of this inscription. It says 10082nd day which is attributed to the dating of the Saka era. When converted into the modern dating system, the exact date given is 105 AD. This is very strong evidence for the antiquity of the Vedas because it shows that even in 1st-2nd century AD, there was a great Brahmana who had done many sacrifices including Vajapeya sacrifice which is a very significant sacrifice. The knowledge and religious perspectives of the Brahmana suggests that the Vedas along with the practice of performing sacrifices were still prevelant around 2,000 years ago and remained till date. It is true that Vajapeya sacrifice is not seen very much anywhere due to the complexity of the sacrifice and the lengthy process, but it is surely a sacrifice mentioned in the Brahmana part of the Vedas still today.

ALINA COPPER PLATE INSCRIPTION OF SILADITYA VII:

This inscription of Siladitya VII is in Alina village of Gujarat. It was discovered by Mr. Harivallabh and published by Dr. Bühler. This inscription is by Siladitya VII himself to a brahmana for taking care of five great sacrifices and other rituals. The dating of the Alina Copper Plate Inscription falls around 766 to 777 AD. On the line 30 of this inscription, we see two very important words. Here is line 30 as follows:

30. lila-kshalit-agrahastaravindah Vyasa iva mridu-kara-grahanad=amandikrit-ananda-vidhih vasu[m]dharayah ra(ka)rmmura(ka)-dhannurvv[e]da iva sabhavinasapra-lakshya-kalapa[h.] pra-

I have underlined the two words "Vyasa" and "dhannurvv[e]da." The word Dhannurvv[e]da here obviously refers to the upaveda of Yajurveda called Dhanurveda which teaches about the art of warfare and a subdivision of the Vedas being present at the time of Siladitya VII shows the ancient past of the Vedas. The word "Vyasa" refers to the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa as Vedavyasa. Now even though Vyasa is a name, but the meaning of the name is very interesting and proves the ancientness of the Vedas. Vyasa means compiler and the actual name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this incarnation is Vedavyasa. So, if we merge the meaning together then the name of Vyasa comes out to be "compiler of the Vedas" which suggests that Vedas were present way before this inscription happened and the author just using the name "Vyasa" instead of "Vedavyasa" shows that the Vedic literature was so common among the people that he didn't even have to write the whole name of him.

KHOH COPPER-PLATE INSCRIPTION OF THE MAHARAJA HASTIN:

Khoh Copper Plate Inscription of Maharaja Hastin was discovered by Colonel Ellis in 1852 near the village of Khoh in India. The dating given is between 482-483 AD. This inscription is by Maharaj Hastin to certain Brahmins and in it we see multiple words or sentences which indicate to the Vedas both directly and indirectly. Instead of looking at the Sanskrit verses of the inscription, this time I will show the translation. Here are the verses as follows:

(Line 7-16) {By him),—for the purpose of increasing his own religious merit,—the agrahara of Korparika, in the northern patta, is granted, with the udranga and the uparikara, and (with the privilege that it is) not to be entered by the irregular or regular troops, to (certain) Brahmans, commencing with Devasvamin, the son of Agnisvamin, of the Bharadvaja gotra (and) a student of the Vâjasaneya (sakha), and Śarvasvamin, (and) Gorisvamin,-Divakarasvamin, of the Kautsa gotra, a student of the Vâjasanéya (sākhā), (and) Svátisvamin,-Varuṇaśarman, of the Bhargava gotra, a student of the Vâjasaneya (sakha), (and) Bappasvamin, -Kumaradeva, of the Vasula gotra, a student of the Katha (sakha), (and) Matriśarman, a student of the Vâjasaneya (sakha), (and) Nagaśarman, Rukharadeva, Kaudravadeva, Vishṇudeva, Devanaga, Kumârasêna, Rudraśarman, Dêvadângiras (?), Lambôshtha, Dêvamitra (?), Mahadeva, (and) Gunthaka.

From line 7 to line 16 we see the mention of various gotras and śākhās of the Vedas. The śākhās and gotras that are mentioned are:

Vājasaneya Śākhā:

- Devasvamin (Bharadvaja gotra)
- Divakarasvamin (Kautsa gotra)
- Varuṇaśarman (Bhargava gotra)

- Matriśarman

Katha Śākhā :

- Kumaradeva (Vasula gotra)

The śākhās are various branches of the Vedas which were adopted by different communities in India for the necessity of oral transmission and preservation. Many of the śākhās are lost over time but there are still few that exist. **Vājasaneya Śākhā** and **Katha Śākhā** are very prominent well known śākhās of Yajurveda. While Vājasaneya śākhā is still alive, Katha Śākhā has been lost over time. Coming back to the key point, these lines in the inscription prove the antiquity of the Vedas in a very detailed way by giving us the names of specific śākhās and gotras. It is important to note that the four gotras that are mentioned are Brahmin gotras from which we can conclude that these Brahmins like Devasvamin, Divakarasvamin etc. studied the Vedas within their own śākhās, as studying the Vedas is the duty of a Brahmin.

Following with this, in line 22 we specifically see the mention of Vedas. The line says, "na nirddahed=Uktan=cha bhagavata param-arshina veda-vyasena Purvva-datta[m*]." The word "bhagavata" means someone who is a great devotee of the Lord, mostly referring to Śrī Vishnu. The word "paramarṣiṇā" refers to the supreme sage and the word "veda-vyasena" refers to Srila Vedavyasa who is a partial incarnation of Śrī Krishna that compiled the Vedas. So, the phrase "bhagavata param-arshina veda-vyasena" means "by the supreme sage Veda Vyasa, who is the compiler of the Vedas and also a great devotee of God." A vital point to recognize is that in Alina Copper Plate Inscription of Siladitya VII, the word used was only vyasa but here in Khoh Copper Plate Inscription of Maharaja Hastin, the word "veda" comes before "vyasa" which gives it the complete form. This minor change in terminology shows us how religious ideas evolved over time. Even though saying just "vyasa" isn't informal but saying

"veda-vyasa" sounds more formal and it's a form of respect that should be given to such a great sage like Srila Vedavyasa. I am emphasizing on this point because there could be an argument that the teachings of Vedic literature have been diluted over time by people with power such as Kings, but here we see the exact opposite. As time went from Siladitya VII to Maharaja Hastin, the evolution of respect for the Dharma instead increased, which is a teaching of Vedic literatures such as Vedas.

CHAMMAK COPPER-PLATE INSCRIPTION OF THE MAHARAJA PRAVARASENA II:

This inscription is by Maharaja Pravarasena II of the Vakataka dynasty to record the grant to a thousand Brahmanas of the Chammak village. Even though a clear modern dating is not given to this inscription but considering the timeline of Maharaja Pravarasena II, we can say that this inscription is from early 5th century AD. In this inscription, not only we see the mention of various gotras, various Vedic sacrifices like Vajapeya or Brihaspatisva etc., we also see the mention of a very significant word. On line 25 of the inscription of the first plate, it is said, "m=atisrishtah [1] ath=Asy=ôchitâm pûrvva-raj-ánumatâm chautrvvaidya-grâma-ma-." It translates to "Now we grant the fixed usage, such as befits this (**village**), (and) such as has been approved of by former kings, of a village which belongs to a community of **Chaturvêdins."** This is big evidence showing the presence of all four Vedas in early 5th century AD. Chaturvedis are people who have the knowledge and understanding of all four Vedas and here it mentions an entire community of Chaturvedis which means that bunch of people had the knowledge and understanding of not just one but all four Vedas. It shows the level of care and respect given to the Vedic traditions and how it was preserved by people of the ancient times.

SIWANI COPPER PLATE INSCRIPTION OF THE MAHARAJA PRAVARSENA II

This is another inscription of Maharaja Pravarsena to record a grant to a Brahmin around the same time in history. In this inscription, just like the last one, the first line states, "(And) who was the son of the son of the Mahârâja of the sovereign Vâkâtakas, the illustrious **Pravarasêna (I.)**, who celebrated the agnishtôma, aptôryâma, ukthya, shôdashin, âtirâtra, vâjapêya, brihaspatisava, and sâdeyaskra sacrifices, and four ashvamêdha-sacrifices, (and) was of the Vishnuvriddha gotra." The reference of Maharaja Pravarasena I celebrating all these Vedic sacrifices along with Ashvamedha sacrifice is very much important because his era was between late 3rd century AD and early 4th century Ad which is over 100 years before Maharaja Pravarsena II came but still at that time there used to be Kshatriyas doing their Dvija(twice-born) duty by performing all these sacrifices. It shows how not only the Brahmin communities but also the Kings who were in such high power have practiced the Vedic rituals and practices in order to protect this wonderful tradition.

KHOH COPPER PLATE INSCRIPTION OF THE MAHARAJA SAMKSHOBHA:

The Khoh Copper Plate Inscription of the Maharaja Samkshobha was discovered by General Cunningham near the village of Khoh. It is dated around 528-529 AD. The inscription is by Maharaja Samkshobha to request for a certain person from a different village. This is a very important inscription as first it starts with praising Lord Vasudeva, indicating that it is a Vedic Vaishnava inscription. After that, on line 3, it mentions the words "Chaturddasa-vidyasthana." The meaning of it is the 14 places of knowledge in the Vedic tradition. They are as follows:

1. The Four Vedas

1. **Rigveda**
2. **Yajurveda**
3. **Samaveda**
4. **Atharvaveda**

2. The Six Vedangas

5. **Shiksha**
6. **Vyakarana**
7. **Chandas**
8. **Nirukta**
9. **Kalpa**
10. **Jyotisha**

3. The Four Upangas

11. **Mimamsa**
12. **Nyaya**
13. **Purana**s
14. **Dharma Shastra**

So here we can see that the two small words written in the inscription mean something much bigger. Here, not only the Vedas but everything around the Vedas that are included in the Vedic literatures have been mentioned which tells us that Vedas were not the only thing that was present in the ancient era of first couple centuries of AD, but all the other Vedic literatures were also present. This not only proves the ancient

presence of the Vedas but proves the ancient presence of the whole Sanatana Dharma itself as these scriptures are base of the Dharma.

Scholarly Perspectives on the Dating of the Vedas:

The exact date of the Vedas has been a very debated topic among the scholars throughout the history. The scholars of Indology suggest various dating of the Vedas based on the astronomical, archeological, and historical findings and all these dating are not that far away from each other. Since I've gone through the books of these scholars, i identified the dating they gave on very specific places of their works. Rather than analyzing each dating in depth, I will put forward a compiled list of scholars, their proposed dates, and references to their works.

The list:

1. **Christian C. J. Bunsen**
    - **Dating:** 4th century BCE
    - **Reference:** *Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History*, p. 137
2. **Edwin Bryant**
    - **Dating:** 3rd or 4th millennium BCE (based on philological and astronomical evidence)
    - **Reference:** *The Quest for the Origin of Vedic Culture*, p. 251
    - **Additional Reference:** *The Indian National Science Academy of New Delhi's History of Astronomy in India* (1985) suggests a dating of **7th millennium BCE** (cited on p. 252)
3. **Stephan Hillyer Levitt**

- **Dating:**
    - Bal Gangadhar Tilak: **6000 BCE**
    - Hermann Jacobi: **3rd millennium BCE**
- **Reference:** *The Dating of the Indian Tradition*, p. 342

4. **David W. Anthony**

- **Dating:** Between **1500 and 1300 BCE**
- **Reference:** *The Horse, The Wheel, and The Language*, p. 49

5. **Max Müller**

- **Dating:** Between **1500 and 1000 BCE**
- **Reference:** *India: What Can It Teach Us?* p. 111 (and other pages)

The differences in dates given to the origin of the Vedas can be seen among these prominent scholars. The dates go as early as 7000 millennium BCE to 4th century BCE. The earlier datings are based off of astronomical findings and internal textual evidences but the later datings down to 4th century BCE could be understood in this way that there is a high lack of solid evidences for Vedic manuscripts of that early period. Most of the later datings are based off of the lack of historical findings and the Indo-Aryan invasion hypothesis. The Indo-Aryan invasion theory is a theory that basically says that the outsiders came into India at a certain time and influenced all these Vedic subjects. This is a very big misconception that has been around for years even after being refuted and still up for debate. The book "The Dating of the Indian Tradition," that is already on the list, says in page 343, "When Keith (1925/I: 13) wrote that there was no evidence of influence in the religion of the Rigveda from the other nations of the East, especially Babylonia, the Mesopotamian material today had not been reported yet." It is very clear

from this text that Aryan-Invasion theory is not true because if there is no influence on the religion from any other nations, then that means the religion was started, maintained, and developed in India itself.

Conclusion Statements of the Section:

In this section we have looked over multiple manuscripts, inscriptions, and scholarly works to prove the antiquity of the Vedas. As Hindus, we have no doubt about the origin of the Vedas because the knowledge of the Vedas has always existed eternally as it is called apauruṣeya. Knowledge is something that always exists but over time certain people just propagate the knowledge. Philosophies and the content of the Vedas have always existed but when it comes to the date when the Vedas were written down, there is a big dispute. We don't have any manuscript that traces back to the time of Srila Vyasadeva which is more than 5,000 years ago from now and to find the exact date of when Vedas were written down, we need exact dating of Srila Vyasadeva himself and scriptures like Mahabharata. When we have an exact date of Mahabharata, it will be very easy to date the time when Vedas were written down because around that era Srila Vyasadeva wrote the Vedas down.

By evaluating all the inscriptions, historical records, and works of the scholars, we can continue to dive deeper into the dating of the Vedas. However, it is essential to acknowledge both historical records and the content of the Vedas themselves because when Vedas originated doesn't have much to do with the improvement in our spiritual life, but if we focus on what is written in the Vedas, that will surely benefit us.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare

The Authenticity of the Vedas

In the previous chapter, we have looked at many documented evidences to establish the antiquity of the Vedas. Even though as Hindus we believe the Vedas are not of human origin, many questions still arise regarding the preservation and the consistent authenticity of the Vedas due to the oral tradition of thousands of years. In this chapter, I will be examining the works of many scholars along with scriptural references to show how the Vedas have been preserved in its original form till today.

METHODS OF PRESERVATION OF THE VEDAS:

To begin, a scholar by the name K Suresh has written a book called "A Brief History of Vedas" in which he gives 3 main methods which have been used to preserve the Vedas. In page 200 of the book, it is said, "(i) By documenting the Vedas in writing or (ii) by counting the number of Mantras, counting the Padas (words), relating the Rishi, Devata, Metre to each Mantra, documenting the total number of Anuvaka, Ashtaka, Adhyayas, Mandala, Kanda, etc. (iii) By splitting the sentences into words (Padas) and repeating them in different specific combinations with a set of prescribed rules, so that words are not dropped from the Samhita pāṭha of that Sakha and the accent is not changed from the original Samhitā pāṭha of that Sakha." Now let's look at the importance of each method in order.

The first method is to document the Vedas in a writing form. We have already discussed previously that Srila Vedavyasa took the responsibility to write down the Vedas because in Kaliyuga people will have short term memory. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.2.1, we can see Śukadeva Gosvāmī saying memory of people will shrink day by day due to the influence of Kaliyuga. The method of documentation was not only practical but essential. It allowed the sacred knowledge of the Vedas to be preserved in its intact form for generations and be a safety against any attempt of interpolation.

The second method is to make an index of the Vedas or in Sanskrit it is called anukramani. This method is very crucial for preserving the authenticity of the Vedic texts. By counting the number of mantras and padas (words) and categorizing them according to their associated rishi (sage), devata (deity), and metre, this process creates a systematic structure that ensures each part of the Vedas is clearly organized. The Anukramani serves as a reference guide that allows scholars and students of Vedic studies cross-reference verses when in need. It ensures that no part of the Vedic knowledge is lost over time by organizing it into divisions such as Anuvaka (sections), Ashtaka (groups), Adhyaya (chapters), Mandala (books), and Kanda (sections), which helps to keep the texts in its original form across generations. This method also makes it very easy to identify a particular mantra's rishi, devata, and metre, making sure that the right recitation methods are followed and maintained. The Anukramani makes the ocean of Vedic knowledge more accessible to scholars and researchers, offering a structured way to locate specific mantras, understand their meanings, and study them or write commentaries on them.

The third method is to maintain the accent of the Samhitā pāṭha of the sakhas by splitting the verses into padas and repeating them in combinations. In Vedic tradition, the pronunciation, order, and intonation of each mantra are given a lot of importance because even a small change in the accent or pronunciation can lead to a distortion in the intended or desired meaning of the mantra. In the Mahābhāṣya of Maharishi Patañjali, it is said, "dustah śabdaḥ svarato varṇato vā, mithyā-prayukto na tamartham āha." It means that a word wrongly accented or sounded, or wrongly employed, it cannot convey the desired meaning. Maharishi Patañjali then goes on to give an example of the mispronounciation of the word "Indra-śatru" which caused the killing of Viśvarūpa and so from that we can see that correctly pronouncing every single word is very important as it is very sensitive when it comes to the meaning of the verse.

There are 11 pāṭhas from which first 3 are called prakṛti pāṭhas and the other 8 are called vikṛti pāṭhas. In prakṛti pāṭha, we have the samhitā pāṭha, which is a very common way of reciting where the words are connected through phonetic combinations, and it makes the text flow smoothly. We also have the pada pāṭha within the prakṛti pāṭha, which ensures the preservation of individual words which is hard to do with samhitā pāṭha. Pada pāṭha is very useful for the students who study the Vedas because it prevents them from making any error in pronounciation.

On the other hand, vikṛti pāṭha is a very complex way of chanting the verses through various recitation patterns where the words are rearranged in a systematic way. The vikṛti pāṭha is so significant for the preservation of the verses which I can't explain with my own words because our Rishis tried their best to come up with many methods to preserve the Vedas as it is and vikṛti pāṭha is one of the best methods. The vikṛti pāṭha leaves no space for error because the same words are being repeated so many times with the same type of intonation in pāṭhas like Jata pāṭha or Ghana pāṭha.

SCHOLARLY VIEWS ON THE AUTHENTICITY AND PRESERVATION OF THE VEDAS:

Just like how we saw in the previous chapter that many of the scholars have talked about the dating of the Vedas, they also talk about the authenticity of the Vedas. Here is a list of the name of the scholars, the reference to their work, and their statements in the book:

- **Adolf Kaegi**, *The Rigveda* (p. 22):
  "Since the time at which our collection was closed about the year 1500 B.C., the text has been handed down, though for centuries orally, with the most painstaking care, so that since that time, nearly 3000 years ago, it has suffered no

changes; with a care such that the history of other literatures has nothing similar to compare with it."

- **Max Müller**, *India: What Can It Teach Us?* (p. 227):
  "If every manuscript of the Rig-Veda were lost, we should be able to recover the whole of it—from the memory of the Srotriyas in India."
- **Yuan Chwang**, *Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* (p. 160):
  "The Rigveda itself still existed only in the memories of the Brahmins, and it was taught entirely by oral communication."
- **Maurice Winternitz**, *A History of Indian Literature* (vol. 1, p. 37):
  "Word for word, with careful avoidance of every error in pronunciation, in accent, in the manner of recitation, the pupil had to repeat them after the teacher and impress them on his memory. There can be no doubt that this kind of oral transmission gives a greater guarantee for the preservation of the original text than the copying and re-copying of manuscripts."
  "The songs of the Rigveda, as we read them today in our printed editions, have remained almost unaltered, word for word, syllable for syllable, accent for accent, since the fifth century B.C."
- **William Dwight Whitney**, *Linguistic Studies of Veda* (p. 22):
  "And so thorough and religious was the care bestowed upon their preservation, that, notwithstanding their mass and the thousands of years which have elapsed since their collection, hardly a single various reading, so far as is yet known, has been suffered to make its way into them after their definite and final establishment."
- **Arthur Anthony Macdonell**, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (p. 50):
  "This work being completed, extraordinary precautions soon began to be taken to guard the canonical text thus fixed against the possibility of any change or

loss. The result has been its preservation with a faithfulness unique in literary history."

- **Max Müller**, *The Ancient Literature of India* (p. 171):
  "The texts of the Veda have been handed down to us with such accuracy that there is hardly a various reading in the proper sense of the word, or even an uncertain accent, in the whole of the Rig-Veda."
- **Monier Monier Williams**, *Indian Wisdom* (p. 144):
  "The eternal voice of divine knowledge heard by certain holy men called Rishis, and by them orally transmitted; or if committed to writing, then written down exactly as heard, without any intervention of human authorship."
- **Frits Staal**, *Discovering the Vedas* (pp. 20-21):
  "Many of the savants I mentioned exemplify branches of Orientalism, traditional and modern, that are based upon the firm foundation of the Oral Tradition which Vedic Indians, and in due course the Brahmanas of India, preserved with astounding precision and more or less faithfully over a period of more than three millennia."
- **David Frawley**, *Wisdom of the Ancient Seers*:
  "The Rig Veda is regarded by many as the oldest book in the world. It is the best preserved of all ancient writings and our most authentic document of the languages of the ancient world. Even the original accents and pronunciations are known."
- **John Muir**, *Original Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and History of the People of India: Their Religion and Institutions* (pp. 318-319):
  "The Vedic hymns, on the contrary, have been preserved unchanged from a very remote period, and exhibit a faithful reflection of the social, religious, and ecclesiastical condition of the age in which they were composed, and of the feelings which were awakened by contemporary occurrences."

- **Allan R. Bomhard & Burrow**, *The Sanskrit Language* (3rd edition, p. 1973): "This applied not only to the preservation of the sacred texts themselves, which have been handed down with scrupulous accuracy by oral tradition."

Examining all these scholarly works, we can come to this fair conclusion that Vedas have been well preserved all through out the history. The content of the Vedas has remained till today, exactly like they were thousands of years ago. In the website by Government of India, called, "National Mission for Manuscripts," it is stated, "UNESCO declared Vedic Chanting a "Heritage of Humanity", In a meeting of jury members on November 7, 2003, at Paris, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, declared the chanting of Vedas in India an outstanding example of heritage and form of cultural expressions. Inscribed in 2008 (3.COM) on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2003)." The evidence here proves my point further to the furthest that Vedas have been fully preserved and 100% authentic till today. This recognition by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, a globally respected organization, is a monumental acknowledgment of the accuracy, continuity, and authenticity of the Vedas. Both the consensus of the scholars and international recognitions make it impossible to deny the originality and the complete authenticity of the Vedas.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare

Answering Misconceptions

Throughout the history, Vedas have been the victim of many misconceptions, misinterpretations, mistranslations, and overall many baseless false claims were made against the historicity of the Vedas. Even after all these historical evidence proving the antiquity and the authenticity of the Vedas like we have seen earlier, many critics still stick to some false accusations due to their lack of understanding. In this chapter, I will address some of these issues and try to give an answer to them.

100K VERSES OF THE VEDAS:

Many people think that Vedas originally had 100k verses and most of it got lost over time, which is a very misguided claim. In the Vedic literature, whenever a big rounded up number like 100K is used, it is a poetic way to show how large something is. In puranas, such as Viṣṇu Purāṇa 3.3.4, it is said "śākhābhedaiḥ sahasraśah." This means "the thousands of different branches." But when the verse is translated, it is instead said as "the branches of the great tree of the Vedas are so numerous." Here we see that it is not necessary to include the number while translating the verse because it actually represents something which is very large. Going further, in the book called The Caraṇavyūha Sūtra of Śaunaka With the Commentary of Mahīdāsa, Ācārya Mahīdāsa writes in page 5 that the puranic description of Vedas with 100k mantras is to depict that the Vedas are infinite without an end and 100k usually refers to something which is very large in numbers. Through this scriptural evidence and scholarly explanation, we can understand that such numbers are used metaphorically, not literally.

ATHARVA VEDA IS A LATER ADDITION:

This is the most foolish claim that the critics put forward. The Vedas are said to be 4 everywhere in the scriptures. Before we dive deeper into the claim of the people

against Atharva Veda, let's look at scriptural references where Atharvaveda has been mentioned.

Here is a list:

1. **Chandogya Upanishad 7.1.4** (Translated by Swami Lokeswarananda)

   - "Name is the Ṛg Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda, and the fourth—the Atharva Veda; then the fifth—history and the Purāṇas; also, grammar, funeral rites, mathematics, the science of omens, the science of underground resources, logic, moral science, astrology, Vedic knowledge, the science of the elements, archery, astronomy, the science relating to snakes, plus music, dance, and other fine arts. These are only names. Worship name."

2. Śrī**mad Bhāgavatam 12.6.50** (Translated by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada)

   - "Śrīla Vyāsadeva separated the mantras of the Ṛg, Atharva, Yajur, and Sāma Vedas into four divisions, just as one sorts out a mixed collection of jewels into piles. Thus he composed four distinct Vedic literatures."

3. **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.5.17** (Translated by Swami Madhavananda)

   - "This is that meditation on things mutually helpful which Dadhyac, versed in the Atharva-Veda, taught the Asvins. Perceiving this the Rsi said, 'O Asvins, you set a horse's head on (the shoulders of) Dadhyac, versed in the Atharva-Veda. O terrible ones, to keep his word he taught you the (ritualistic) meditation on things mutually helpful connected with the sun, as also the secret (spiritual) meditation on them.'"

4.**Valmiki Ramayan 1.15.2** (Translated by Hari Prasad Shastri)

   - "O King, I will perform the sacrifice Puttatresti, spoken of in the Atharva Veda, which will assist thee in thy endeavor to obtain a son."

So, we can see that the mention of Atharvaveda is seen in the most prominent scriptures of Hinduism. If we look at the inscriptions, then we saw earlier that in many places there were mention of Chaturvedi which indicates that Atharvaveda was always present. Furthermore, there is an inscription by the name "NIRMAND COPPER-PLATE INSCRIPTION OF THE MAHASAMANTA AND MAHARAJA SAMUDRASENA," and in its line 8 says, "to the body of Brahmanas who study the Atharva-Veda at the Agrahara of Nirmanda." So, we can see that Atharva Veda was always present along with the other 3 Vedas.

The actual problem that people have is that in our scriptures like Bhagavata Gita 9.17 or other prominent scriptures and even the Talagunda inscription mention only 3 Vedas and through that the critics come to the conclusion that Vedas were originally 3 and Atharvaveda was added later on. However, this is completely false. When words like Ṛk, Yajuṣ, and Sāman are mentioned, it refers to the type of mantras present in all 4 Vedas, not the Vedas themselves. Ṛk, Yajuṣ, and Sāman are 3 types of mantras that are present in the Vedas. Rigveda could have Ṛk mantras and Yajuṣ mantras and the same could be for other Vedas too. So this way, Atharvaveda has a mixture of all these 3 types of mantras. This is evident in Purva Mimamsa Sutras of Jaimini 2.1.35-37 translated by Mahāmahōpādhyāya Ganganath Jha where we see that the Ṛk mantras are said to be where "there is division into metrical feet in accordance with the limitations of the meaning," Sāman mantras are said to be the music and rest of the mantras are called Yajuṣ mantras. To elaborate on that, Mahatma Narayan Swami has wrote in his book called Vedarahasya in page 51 that the Ṛk, Yajuṣ, and Sāman are the 3 types of mantras used in the sacrifices and when words like Vedatrayī are used, it is referred to all 4 Vedas and then he goes on to give reference from Atharvaveda which has the name of all 4 Vedas to further validate his point. If we also look at the Śabara-Bhāṣya of the same sutras of Purva Mimamsa, translated by Mahāmahōpādhyāya Ganganath Jha, we see something similar where all these are said to be types of mantras instead of calling them 3 Vedas. In

conclusion, we can say that the Vedas have always been 4 including the Atharvaveda, and when there were mention of Ṛk, Yajuṣ, and Sāman, it always referred to the types of mantras present in all 4 Vedas.

1% AUTHENTICITY:

The claim of the critics is that since the Vedas contain around 20,000 verses, then the Hindus should be able to put forward at least 200 written down verses of any manuscript from an ancient time to prove the antiquity of the Vedas. This is a baseless claim for various reason. First, we have to keep in mind is that carbon dating manuscripts is not the only way of a dating a text. A text can be dated through astronomical dating too. Second, the oldest surviving copy of a book basically tells us the latest published or written copy of that book, not the earliest date of that book. It is impossible to date the Vedas just by looking at the oldest surviving manuscripts because speaking and writing is two different things. Vedas are said to be śruti, which is heard, and it means that Vedas were orally preserved for centuries because our Rishis never wanted the Vedas to be interpolated or distorted over time. When Vedas were written down, they were written down on birch bark or palm leaves which are very easy to be destroyed, and many people used to throw these manuscripts into the fire sacrifices. Oral preservation was none other than a preservation technique to keep the Vedas away from being corrupted.

When we come to the astronomical dating of the Shathapatha Brahmana, research papers like "ON THE ASTRONOMICAL BASIS OF THE DATE OF SATAPATHA BRĀHMAṆA: A RE-EXAMINATION OF DIKSHIT'S THEORY" by B.N. Narahari Achar and "Flogging a Dead Horse: A rejoinder to R.S. Sharma" by Michel Danino suggest an approximate astronomical dating of somewhere between 3rd and 4th

millennium BCE for Shathapatha Brahmana. Now if we go with this dating of Shathapatha Brahmana, then there are many verses of the Vedas in Shathapatha Brahmana which have been the same way for years and that could be a way to directly prove the antiquity and the authenticity of the Vedas. Scholars also date the Nirukta (one of the Vedanga) before Buddha and in the Nirukta, we see the mention of way more than 200 verses of the Vedas which obviously prove the more than 1% authenticity of the Vedas. Furthermore, in Shathapatha Brahmana 10.4.2.23 and 10.4.2.24, we see the mention of how many Brihatis the Veda mantras were arranged to. It is said that Rigveda was arrange into 12,000 Brihatis. Now when the Vedic literatures are measured, first all the words are divided into the syllables. Then the syllables are multiplied by 36 to convert them into Brihati chandas. So, through this calculation, Rigveda has 12,000 x 36 = 432,000 Brihati chandas. Surprisingly, Śaunaka's Anuvakanukramani also states that Rigveda had exactly 432,000 Brihati chandas which proves how well preserved each syllable of the Vedas were. In conclusion, Vedas have been preserved 100% the way it is and thinking that manuscripts are the only way to date the Vedas is very foolish.

Concluding Statements

The sole reason of me writing this book is to showcase the great historicity of the Vedas in a very simple, yet in a detailed way so that this book could be a good resource for both the common people and the people interested to study this topic to use it as a research tool. This is more of a research investigation paper put in a book format so that more people read it and benefit from it. There are many more evidence regarding the antiquity of the Vedas or the authenticity of the Vedas which I have not included to keep the book short and simple. However, I think that although it is important for us to know the history of a scripture like the Vedas, we should focus more on what is in it. The content of the Vedas matters more than when and where they originated because knowledge is eternal like I have said before earlier, people just propagate it. 2+2=4 is a fact which have always existed. Even if us humans never realized this fact, it would have still truly existed so likewise the Vedas have the true knowledge of God which have always existed but was given to us in a Guru-shishya Parampara which starts from Lord Brahma, down to till today. So, my humble request to everyone is that let us please not forget the importance of the Vedas and let us work together to uphold the Vedic tradition of thousands of years.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

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